William Frederick Poole

and

The New England Clergy

An Address
Delivered at the
Essex County Institute
Salem, Mass.
January 1, 1900
by
Z. Swift Holbrook
of
Boston

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE AUTHOR.

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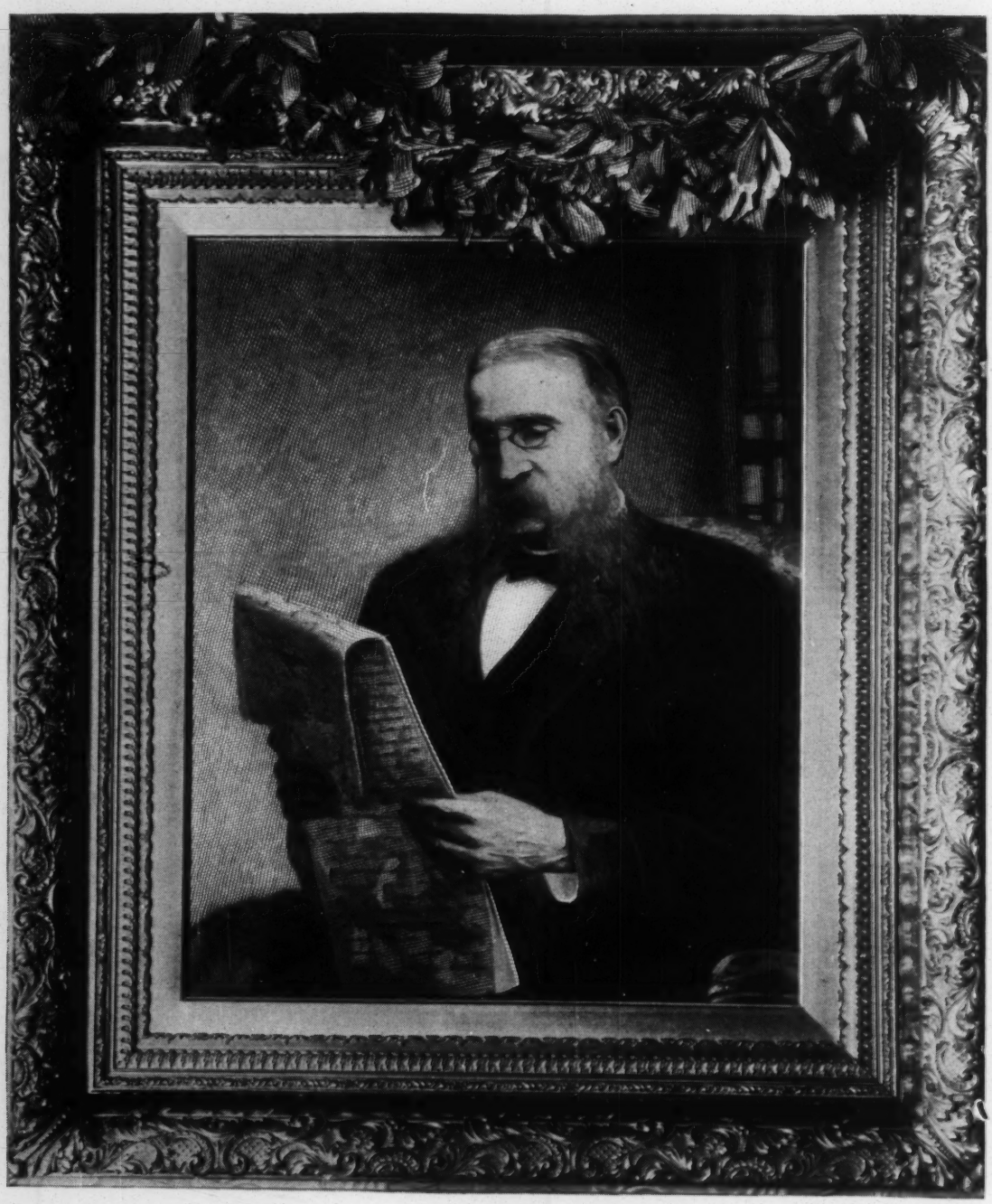

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DR. POOLE AND THE NEW ENGLAND CLERGY.[1]

BY Z. SWIFT HOLBROOK.

AMONG the distinguished sons of Essex County whose portraits grace the walls of this Institute, and whose names are ever held in grateful remembrance by the people of this Commonwealth, it is eminently fitting that the portrait of William Frederick Poole should occupy a conspicuous place. He was born in Salem, December 24, 1821, and was buried here in Harmony Grove, March 4, 1894. The donor of this portrait, his eldest daughter, was also born in Salem. Her abiding affection for her father, her respect for his memory, and her kindly regard for the place of his and her birth, have led her to intrust this portrait to your permanent custody.

It is preëminently fitting that this presentation should come in Salem, for Dr. Poole was almost the first to state to this century the facts of history in relation to the sad tragedies enacted here three centuries ago. He was the sturdy defender of the Puritan character, and especially of the clergy who in the early days of the colonies were supposed to have exercised such an unhappy influence upon the people and to have used that influence oftentimes for selfish or personal ends.

To understand or appreciate the Puritan character, one

[1] An Address delivered at the Essex County Institute, Salem, Mass., January 1, 1900. The occasion of this address was the presentation to the Essex County Institute of a portrait of Dr. Poole,—a gift from Alice Poole Holbrook. The portrait was an oil painting by F. Thorp of Washington, D. C., and was finished just prior to Dr. Poole's death.

must know the fashions of thought that prevailed in the century in which they lived, and one must not judge them by standards of excellence that existed a century or more later, especially when those standards were the outgrowth of the very influences they started in motion.

If civil and religious liberty were the outcome of Puritan teachings, although, like all the children of men in their day and generation, the Puritans themselves may have been intolerant and superstitious, then we must exercise a wise charity for their failure to teach truths that were the discovery of a later age. It is hardly fair to turn the electric light upon their tallow dips and blame them for their feeble rays.

Dr. Poole was singularly gifted to interpret the Puritan character, and to correct the popular errors that existed relative to witchcraft and its causes. By heredity and education he was in possession of those qualities of mind and heart that are requisite to understand and appreciate the men of the seventeenth century. The faults and the virtues of the Pilgrim and the Puritan have awakened by turns, and in an almost equal degree, the pity and the admiration of those who have inherited their characteristics, but who have too often used their strength to judge unjustly, by the religious and ethical standards of to-day, the men who were far in advance of their own times yesterday. The full blaze of the noonday sun has been turned upon the gray brindled dawn, and few historians have been broad enough or just enough to remember that the dawn succeeded the night.

Not so with Dr. Poole; for, not only in blood lineage, but in breadth of vision and sympathy of views, he was in direct descent from the men who made the Massachusetts Colony famous. He simply was a twentieth-century Puritan. He had a profound regard for facts. To him a fact was a mountain peak to be reckoned with. His intellec-

tual integrity was, therefore, marked. It reminded one of the same characteristic in those victims of the witchcraft delusion at Salem who might have saved their lives by admitting that they were possessed, but who maintained a love for the truth even to death. This characteristic easily passed, in those days, for stubbornness; but James Russell Lowell has said of it:—

"Though some of the accused had been terrified into confession, yet not one persevered in it, but all died protesting their innocence, and with unshaken constancy, though an acknowledgment of guilt would have saved the lives of all. This martyr proof of the efficacy of Puritanism in the character and conscience may be allowed to outweigh a great many sneers at Puritan fanaticism. It is at least a testimony to the courage and constancy which a profound religious sentiment had made common among the people of whom these sufferers were average representatives. The accused also were not, as was commonly the case, abandoned by their friends."[1]

Emerson has also well said that the strength of a character is its power of resistance. Facts are stubborn things, but a character that loves facts may not necessarily be so stubborn as rugged and honest. Some one has said that there are people who dwell in the realm of illusions; for them there exist no facts. Looking at history from this standpoint, Dr. Poole once said that fiction was as near to truth as most history that had been written, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson has but recently said that history is the most inexact of all sciences. Such historians as George Bancroft and Upham were a sore vexation to Dr. Poole,—the former because he sacrificed truth to a florid and sophomoric style, and the latter because he always had a theory to maintain and could not reason with a fact that was against his theory. President Porter of Yale once said that even Macaulay would sacrifice a fact of history for a well-balanced sentence.

Dr. Poole could not sacrifice a fact to anything. He was, therefore, severe on William Cullen Bryant for loan-

[1] No. Am. Review, Jan. 1868, p. 230.

ing his name to books that he did not write nor even compile. One could not imagine Dr. Poole making a contract with the elders of the Mormon Church to write up favorably the history of the Latter-Day Saints in consideration of their taking a number of the histories when completed and of using the historian's readers in their schools. Such a revolting prostitution of history for purposes of gain is the lowest depth of intellectual dishonesty. And yet one of the best-reputed historians of to-day is reported by his own nephew to have entered into this unholy compact, and his history of the Mormons can be accounted for on no other ground. The weaknesses and foibles of historians would constitute a volume as readable as the persistence of historical myths.

The leading characteristic of Dr. Poole was his intellectual integrity. The libels of Calef on Cotton Mather were to him a moral crime no greater than the intellectual crime of Upham, when writing on Salem Witchcraft, in ignoring the facts of history. When Lowell praised Upham for his work on Salem Witchcraft, Dr. Poole was aroused to reply to it, which he did in a daily newspaper. Lowell soon after met him and said, "If you can say anything in favor of those old fellows, I wish you would write it for the *North American Review*." The challenge was accepted, and the article on Salem Witchcraft, in April, 1869, was the result. It attracted at once the widest attention and notice. When Justin Winsor published his "Memorial History of Boston," Dr. Poole was selected to write on Witchcraft in Boston. That chapter remains to-day the masterpiece in English literature on that subject. Its facts have never been refuted, and it will stand the test of investigation and of time, for its painstaking attention to details, its profound respect for facts, its breadth and fairness. When Longfellow, in 1868, wrote the second of his New England tragedies on Witchcraft, the first being

on the Quakers, he surprised historians and scholars by paying high tribute to Cotton Mather. Few have ever known that for his facts he consulted Dr. Poole, who was then librarian at the Athenæum in Boston. Professor John Fiske of Harvard College has said within a few days that to Longfellow in 1868, and to Poole in 1869, we are indebted for correct estimates of Cotton Mather's character and influence, and he adds that Dr. Poole is accurate in his conclusions.

The attempt to manufacture history in accordance with prejudice found a good illustration in the English estimate of Cromwell that prevailed until Macaulay and others set the tide in another direction and showed that it was a Tory estimate. The same is true of the estimates that up to thirty years ago prevailed as to the character and influence of the clergy in the early history of the colonies. It was Dr. Poole who showed that the lawyers and judges, following English precedents, were responsible for the atrocities at Salem in 1692, and that the clergy shared in that responsibility only to the extent that, in common with all the rest and the best of mankind, they believed in a personal devil and in demoniacal possessions, or in witchcraft. He also showed that Salem witchcraft was but an infinitesimal part of a delusion that spread over the whole earth, and had caused the death of more than two hundred thousand persons in other countries before it broke out in the colonies. The Salem tragedies were but a few ripples on the shore, the spent forces of a great storm that stirred the whole ocean to its very depths. The wonder has always been that, in an age so narrow, a superstition so widespread had so little influence in the colonies, and caused the death of so few.

Let us traverse again, but briefly, the interesting ground over which Dr. Poole plodded so faithfully in pursuit of the truths which he supported and maintained,—that some of the best people on earth made up the Colony of Massa-

chusetts, and that the clergy, and particularly Cotton Mather, were among the wisest and best of these men.

Briefly, we may revert to what he said of the universality of the belief in witchcraft in other countries; of what was the prevailing opinion among historians at the time he wrote his review of Upham, and what it has been since then; what the true character and influence of the clergy was in the history of the colonies. Dr. Poole wrote as follows:—

"The storm of terror and death, called the Witchcraft Delusion, which swept over Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, left its traces on the early life of the New England Colonies. While it raged in Europe, thirty thousand victims perished in the British Islands, seventy-five thousand in France, one hundred thousand in Germany, and corresponding numbers in Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and Sweden. Witchcraft in New England was of a sporadic and spasmodic type compared with its epidemic and protracted virulence in the Old World; and yet the thirty-two executions in the New England Colonies, for supposed confederation with devils, have filled a larger space in history and in public attention than the thirty thousand similar executions which occurred in the mother country. English writers at this day, when they need striking proof of the superstitions of former times, take their illustrations from the records of New England witchcraft. A full and impartial account of English and Scottish diabolism has never commended itself, as a subject of historical investigation, to a modern English writer. Such a record as New England has of its later witchcraft is a desideratum in the historical literature of old England. The theme is one of strange and perpetual interest; and as a subject for psychological study it will never lose its hold on the minds of men. The recent phenomena which under the names of magic, sorcery, necromancy, enchantment, mesmerism, fetichism, and witchcraft are as old as history and universal as the human race. The New England Colonists had no views concerning witchcraft and diabolical agency which they did not bring with them from the Old World. The prosecutions in England were never carried on with a blinder zeal and more fatal results than during the first twenty years after Governor Winthrop and his company landed at Boston. James Howell, who was later 'Historiographer Royal' to Charles II., says in his Familiar Letters, February 3, 1647: 'We have multitudes of witches among us; for in Essex and Suffolk there were above two hundred indicted within these two years, and above half of them were executed.' February 2, 1647, he writes: 'Within the compass of two years, near upon three hundred witches were arraigned, and the major part of them

executed, in Essex and Suffolk only. Scotland swarms with them more and more, and persons of good quality are executed daily.'

"At that time the professional 'Witch-Finder-General,' Matthew Hopkins, was passing through the English counties practising his trade, and under the sanction of the courts subjecting his victims to every species of torture and indignity. His method of 'searching' and 'watching' suspected persons was recommended in the law-books, and was, we shall see, by order of the General Court of Massachusetts, applied to the first witch executed in the Massachusetts Colony. His water-test was tried in Connecticut. These outrageous proceedings were not condemned by the English clergy, either of the Established Church or of the Dissenters. There was no doubt in the legal or clerical profession as to the reality of witchcraft, or as to the duty of the courts to extirpate it. The English law-books gave the most minute directions as to the means of detecting, and the form of trying witches."[1]

Sir William Blackstone, more than seventy years after the last witch was executed in New England, wrote:—

"To deny the possibility, nay, actual existence of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once flatly to contradict the revealed Word of God, in various passages in both the Old and the New Testament; and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation in the world hath in its turn borne testimony, either by examples seemingly well attested, or by prohibitory laws, which at least suppose the possibility of commerce with evil spirits."[2]

When men like Blackstone, Sir Matthew Hale, Richard Baxter believed in witchcraft, who can blame the colonists for harboring such a wretched delusion.

The first execution in Boston for witchcraft was that of Margaret Jones of Charlestown, on June 15, 1648. She was tried and convicted before the General Court, composed almost wholly of the original founders of the colony. Winthrop was governor, and the only account we have of it is found in his journal:—

"Mary Johnson was executed the same year in Hartford. Mary Parsons was tried in 1651, and again in 1674; her husband, Hugh Parsons, was tried in 1652. In 1651 two persons were tried in Hartford. In 1653 Goodwife Knap was hanged at Fairfield, Conn. In 1656 Mrs. Ann Hibbins, the widow of an eminent Boston Merchant and magistrate was

[1] Art. on "Witchcraft in Boston," in Memorial History of Boston, Vol. ii. p. 131.

[2] Commentaries, Book iv. chap. 4 [61].

hanged. Hutchinson says, three witches were condemned at Hartford, January 20, 1662-63. 'After one of the witches was hanged, the maid was well.' Cotton Mather was born twenty-three days after this date. A woman named Greensmith was hanged at Hartford in 1665. Elizabeth Segur was condemned at Hartford in 1665, and Katherine Harrison at Wethersfield in 1669. The water test so successfully applied by Matthew Hopkins in England, by which he caused the death of one hundred persons in Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk from 1645 to 1647, was tried in Connecticut. The method was, to tie the thumb of the right hand to the great toe of the left foot, and draw the victim through a horse-pond. If they floated they were witches; if they sank, they were in all likelihood drowned. The account of these Connecticut women is, that they 'swam like a cork.'

"In 1670 Mary Webster, of Hadley, was examined at Northampton, sent to Boston, and acquitted. On her return to Hadley, a mob of young men dragged her out of her house, hung her up till she was almost dead, let her down, rolled her in the snow, and left her. A similar scene was enacted at Great Paxton, a village within sixty miles of London, in the year 1608, on a poor woman named Ann Izard, accused of bewitching three girls.

"From 1652 to the time of the great outbreak in Salem the courts of Essex County in Massachusetts were constantly investigating alleged cases of witchcraft. John Godfrey, of Andover, was cried out upon in 1659. One witness swore, that, six or seven years before, being in the first seat in the gallery of the meeting-house in Rowley, he did see in the second seat one whom he believed was John Godfrey, yawning; and while opening his mouth, so yawning, did see a small teat under his tongue. In 1669 there was another case of a female physician charged with witchcraft by a regular practitioner. Goody Burt, a widow, was accused by Philip Reed, a physician, of producing cures which could be accounted for by no natural cause. She practised in Salem, Lynn, and Marblehead. In 1679 the family of William Morse, of Newbury, was disturbed in a strange manner. The case gave rise to many examinations and much evidence." [1]

The reason why witchcraft in New England more than in all the rest of the world, has had so conspicuous a place in history has been due in part to the carefully preserved records of it in the journals and diaries of such men as Winthrop and Cotton Mather. The clergy were the leaders of the people in all matters of public concern, in political science, and in religion; hence they were especially con-

[1] No. Am. Review, April, 1869, pp. 344-346.

spicuous, but, so far as Cotton Mather and the clergy of Boston were concerned, only in staying the hand of cruelty in the tragedies that were enacted.

Dr. Poole said:—

"When the Governor and Council asked the advice of the clergy of Boston and the vicinity, in June, 1692, those ministers advised—and Cotton Mather drew up the advice—that 'there is need of very critical and exquisite caution,' and recommended 'that the directions given by such judicious writers as Perkins and Bernard' may be observed."[1]

And yet the name of Cotton Mather has been connected with the Salem executions by Calef and Upham, the former a malicious and congenital liar, and the latter so careless in the investigation of his facts as to be equally untrustworthy.

Here are Dr. Poole's words:—

"Twelve years afterwards, Robert Calef, between whom and Mr. Mather a personal quarrel existed, and many bitter words had passed, published his 'More Wonders of the Invisible World,' in which he says (p. 152): 'Mr. Mather was the most active and forward of any minister in the country in these [Goodwin] matters, taking home one of the children, and managing such intrigues with that child, and, after, printing such an account of the whole in his 'Memorable Providences,' as conduced much to the kindling those flames that in Sir William's time threatened the devouring this country.' We shall in another place speak of the value to be set upon Calef's statements respecting Mr. Mather. Soon after Calef's book appeared, the parishioners of Mr. Mather took up this accusation, and in 'Some Few Remarks,' 1701, which Mr. Upham has never seen, proved it to be a downright falsehood. One of the seven persons who prepared the reply was John Goodwin, the father of the children. He makes, over his own name, a further statement, which we give entire.

"'Let the world be informed, that, when one of my children had been laboring under said circumstances from the Invisible World for about *a quarter of a year*, I desired the ministers of Boston, with Charlestown, to keep a day of prayer at my house, if so be deliverance might be obtained. Mr. Cotton Mather was the last of the ministers that I spoke to on that occasion, and though, by reason of some necessary business, he could not attend, yet he came to my house in the morning of that day, and tarried about half an hour, and went to prayer with us before any other minister came. *Never before had I the least acquaintance with him.*

[1] Memorial History of Boston, Vol. ii.

About two or three months after this, I desired that another day of prayer might be kept by the aforesaid ministers, which accordingly they did, and Mr. Cotton Mather was then present. But he never gave me the least advice, neither face to face nor by way of epistles, neither directly nor indirectly; but the motion of going to the authority was made to me by a minister of a neighboring town, now departed; and matters were managed by me, in prosecution of the supposed criminal, wholly without the advice of any minister or lawyer, or any other person. The ministers would now and then come to visit my distressed family, and pray with and for them, among which Mr. Cotton Mather would now and then come, and go to prayer with us. Yet all that time he never advised me to anything concerning the law, or trial of the accused person; but after that wicked woman had been condemned about a fortnight, Mr. Cotton Mather invited one of my children to his house; and within a day or two after that the woman was executed.

"'JOHN GOODWIN.'"[1]

When Salem itself afterward produced a so-called historian who wrote on witchcraft, and whose writings were accepted as the truth of history, even by Lowell, no one appeared to dispute his conclusions until Dr. Poole, in 1869, exposed his inaccuracies, not to say his prejudices. Lowell had said of Upham:—

"The two beautiful volumes of Mr. Upham are, so far as I know, unique in their kind. It is, in some respects, a clinical lecture on human nature, as well as on the special epidemical disease under which the patient is laboring. He has written not merely a history of the so-called Salem Witchcraft, but has made it intelligible by a minute account of the place where the delusion took its rise, the persons concerned in it, whether as actors or sufferers, and the circumstances which led to it. By deed, wills, and the records of courts and churches, by plans, maps, and drawings, he has recreated Salem Village as it was two hundred years ago, so that we seem well-nigh to talk with its people and walk over its fields, or through its cart-tracks and bridle-roads. We are made partners in parish and village feuds, we share in the chimney-corner gossip, and learn for the first time how many mean and merely human motives, whether consciously or unconsciously, gave impulse and intensity to the passions of the actors in that memorable tragedy which dealt the death-blow in this country to the belief in Satanic compacts. Mr. Upham's minute details, which gave us something like a photographic picture of the in-door and out-door scenery that surrounded the events he narrates, help us materially to understand their origin and the course they inevitably took. In this respect his book is original and full of new interest.

[1] No. Am. Review, April, 1869, pp. 353, 354.

To know the kind of life these people led, the kind of place they dwelt in, and the tenor of their thought, makes much real to us that was conjectural before. The influence of outward nature, of remoteness from the main highways of the world's thought, of seclusion, as the foster-mother of traditionary beliefs, of a hard life and unwholesome diet in exciting or obscuring the brain through the nerves and stomach, have been hitherto commonly overlooked in accounting for the phenomena of witchcraft. The great persecutions for this imaginary crime have always taken place in lonely places, among the poor, the ignorant, and, above all, the ill-fed.

"One of the best things in Mr. Upham's book is the portrait of Parris, the minister of Salem Village, in whose household the children who, under the assumed possession of evil spirits, became accusers and witnesses, began their tricks."

"Mr. Upham's sincere and honest narrative, while it never condescends to a formal plea, is the best vindication possible of a community which was itself the greatest sufferer by the persecution which its credulity engendered." [1]

In the same review, a year later, Dr. Poole answered Lowell, and wrote:—

"In 1831 Mr. Upham printed his 'Lectures on Salem Witchcraft,' in which he brought some very grave charges against Cotton Mather, as being the contriver, instigator, and promoter of the delusion, and the chief conspirator against the lives of the sufferers. These charges have been repeated by Mr. Quincy in his 'History of Harvard University,' by Mr. Peabody in his 'Life of Cotton Mather,' by Mr. Bancroft, and by nearly all historical writers since that date. Mr. Upham, after an interval of thirty-six years, has reiterated and emphasized his original accusations, in his elaborate 'History of Salem Witchcraft,' printed in 1867. They have obtained a lodgement in all the minor and school histories; and the present generation of youth is taught that nineteen innocent persons were hanged, and one was pressed to death, to gratify the vanity, ambition, and stolid credulity of Mr. Cotton Mather.

"If any one imagines that we are stating the case too strongly, let him try an experiment on the first bright boy he meets by asking, 'Who got up Salem Witchcraft?' and, with a promptness that will startle him, he will receive the reply, 'Cotton Mather.' Let him try another boy with the question, 'Who was Cotton Mather?' and the answer will come, 'The man who was on horseback, and hung witches.' An examination of the historical text-books used in our schools will show where these ideas originated. We have the latest editions of a dozen such manuals before us; but the following examples must suffice.

[1] No. Am. Review, Jan. 1868, pp. 226-227, 231. This article appeared anonymously, but Justin Winsor credits it to Lowell, and in fact it appears in his published works.

" 'Cotton Mather, an eccentric, but influential minister, took up the matter, and great excitement spread through the colony. Among those hanged was a minister named Burroughs, who had denounced the proceedings of Mather and his associates. At his execution Mather appeared among the crowd on horseback, and quieted the people with quotations from Scripture. Mather gloried in these judicial murders.'—QUACKENBOS'S *School History of the United States*, 1868, pp. 138–140.

" 'Cotton Mather and other popular men wrote in its defense. Calef, a citizen of Boston, exposed Mather's credulity, and greatly irritated the minister. Mather called Calef a "weaver turned minister," a "coal from hell," and prosecuted him for slander.'—LOSSING'S *Pictorial History of the United States*, 1868, p. 106.

" 'Most of those who participated as prosecutors in the unrighteous work confessed their error; still there were some, the most prominent of whom was Cotton Mather, who defended their course to the last.'—ANDERSON'S *School History of the United States*, 1868, p. 57.

" 'The new authorities, under the influence of the clergy, of whom, in this particular, Cotton Mather was the leader, pursued a course which placed the accused in situations where they had need to be magicians not to be convicted of magic. Malice and revenge carried on the work which superstition began.'—EMMA WILLARD'S *History of the United States*, 1868, p. 100.

" We give two other extracts from more elaborate works.

" 'New England, at that time [1692], was unfortunate in having among her ministers a pedantic, painstaking, self-complacent, ill-balanced man called Cotton Mather; his great industry and verbal learning gave him undue currency, and his writings were much read. He was indefatigable in magnifying himself and his office. In an age when light reading consisted of polemic pamphlets, it is easy to see that his stories of "Margaret Rule's dire Afflictions" would find favor, and prepare the public mind for a stretch of credulity almost equal to his own.'—ELLIOTT'S *New England History*, 1867, Vol. ii. p. 43.

" 'He incurred the responsibility of being its chief cause and promoter. In the progress of the superstitious fear, which amounted to frenzy, and could not be satisfied with blood, he neither blenched nor halted; but attended the courts, watched the progress of invisible agency in the prisons, and joined the multitude in witnessing the executions.'—QUINCY'S *History of Harvard University*, Vol. i. p. 63." [1]

"No historian has a moral right to assail the character of a man who bore a good reputation in his day, without an exhaustive and candid examination of authorities. Such an examination we shall show that Mr. Upham has not made in the case of Cotton Mather, and that he has used the facts which have come under his observation with a strong bias against Mr. Mather as a man of integrity and veracity. Mr. Upham does

[1] No. Am. Review, April 1869, pp. 338–348.

not bring a particle of evidence or quote a single authority in proof of allegation that the Goodwin case 'was brought about by Cotton Mather's management,'—an allegation which he accompanies by others equally unsupported. He says:—

"'Dr. Cotton Mather aspired to be considered the great champion of the Church, and the most successful combatant against the Prince of the Power of the Air. He seems to have longed for an opportunity to signalize himself in this particular kind of warfare, and repeatedly endeavored to get up a delusion of this kind in Boston. An instance of witchcraft was brought about by his management in 1688. There is some ground for suspicion that he was instrumental in causing the delusion in Salem; at any rate, he took a leading part in conducting it.'—*Lectures*, pp. 106, 107." [1]

"Mr. Upham is never at a loss to know what Mr. Mather 'contemplated' on any occasion,—what 'he longed for,'—what 'he would have been glad to have,'—what 'he looked upon with secret pleasure,'—and what 'he was secretly and cunningly endeavoring' to do. Mr. Peabody also knows when 'Cotton Mather was in his element,' and what 'he enjoyed the great felicity of.' We do not hope to follow these writers into the dark recesses of Mr. Mather's mind; but in the course of this investigation we shall take up some of their statements and examine them in the light of evidence that may be regarded as historical." [2]

"In Mr. Upham's view, the Goodwin affair had a very important relation to the Salem troubles. Cotton Mather 'got up' this case; this case 'got up' the Salem cases; therefore Cotton Mather 'got up' Salem Witchcraft. This is the argument concisely stated. It is proper, therefore, to inquire what there was in Mr. Mather's practice with the Goodwin children that foreshadowed the shocking scenes at Salem. His whole conduct in this transaction—call it credulous and superstitious, if the reader will—was marked with kindness, patience, and Christian charity towards the accused, the afflicted children, their friends, and four poor wretches, who, if the affair had been in other hands, might have come under condemnation. He had a method of his own for the treatment of witchcraft and possessions. He believed in the power of prayer. The Almighty Sovereign was his Father, and had promised to hear and answer his petitions. He had often tested this promise, and had found it faithful and sure. Some will call such faith as his credulity and superstition; but this was Cotton Mather's method. He applies it to the cases in question. The children all recover. He deems it an act of grace in answer to prayer. He writes his 'Memorable Providences' to prove two propositions: 1. That witchcraft is a reality, and 2. To illustrate the proper method of treating it. In his introductory note 'To the Reader' he says: 'Prayer is the powerful and effectual remedy against the malicious practices of devils and those that covenant with them'; and con-

[1] No. Am. Review, April, 1869, pp. 352, 353. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 342.

cludes the narrative as he began, with these words: 'All that I have now to publish is, that Prayer and Faith was the thing which drove the devils from the children; and I am to bear this testimony unto the world: That the Lord is nigh to all them who call upon Him in truth, and that blessed are all they that wait for Him.'

"The peculiarity of the Salem cases was, that the managers hanged their witches, and the more victims they hanged the more the delusion spread. Cotton Mather, on the other hand, prayed with and for his bewitched ones, exorcised the demons (as he supposed), saved the children, suppressed the names of those accused, and put a stop to all further proceedings. Hutchinson says: 'The children returned to their ordinary behavior, lived to an adult age, made profession of religion, and the affliction they had been under they publicly declared to be one motive for it. One of them I knew many years after. She had the character of a very sober, virtuous woman, and never made any acknowledgment of fraud in the transaction.' Mr. John Goodwin and his wife Martha united with Mr. Mather's church, May 25, 1690. Before this their relations had been with the church at Charlestown. The four children were subsequently admitted to Mr. Mather's church. Nathaniel Goodwin, the eldest of the sons, July 22, 1728, took out letters of administration on Cotton Mather's estate."[1]

"It ought to have occurred to Mr. Upham that he has sufficiently accounted for the origin of the Salem proceedings without laying any portion of the responsibility upon Cotton Mather. He assigns as causes: 1. The general prevalence of erroneous opinions respecting diabolical agency, as well in England as in this country; 2. The parish troubles in Salem Village, to which he devotes much space; 3. The Indian servants of Mr. Parris, who taught the afflicted children their tricks; 4. The intrigue and malice of Mr. Parris; 5. The family and neighborhood feuds of the village; 6. The stolid credulity of the local magistrates, Hathorne and Curwin; 7. The infatuation of the judges in admitting spectral testimony, and adhering to the dogma that the Devil could act only through willing confederates. These would seem to be sufficient to account for the origin of the Salem delusion. Cotton Mather had no connection with these incidents, and he had no opinions on witchcraft that were not held by all the clergy of the land. The storm was raised, the jails of the country were filled, persons had confessed themselves to be witches and were accusing others, and the whole community was in an uproar, before Cotton Mather's name appears legitimately in the tragedy."[2]

"Cotton Mather never attended one of the trials at Salem in any capacity,—as adviser, witness, or spectator. He made visits to Salem while those sad and pitiful scenes were occurring, but, as we shall presently see, for quite another purpose than that which has been alleged.

[1] No. Am. Review, April, 1869, pp. 357, 358. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 262.

The intimation that he took delight in these proceedings is a groundless accusation. His book, though written in haste and amid excitement, is full of compassion for the poor afflicted ones. His method of combating witchcraft by spiritual weapons he never swerved from, even when admitting that the civil magistrates had a duty to perform. Not an expression implying bloodthirstiness can be found in all his writings." [1]

As illustrations of the persistence of historical inaccuracies, two may here be mentioned: In 1887 Mr. Brooks Adams published his book, "The Emancipation of Massachusetts," and he repeated as history the misrepresentations of Calef and the inaccuracies of Upham. In reviewing this book, Dr. Poole said:—

"To this little and harmless book [Memorable Providences] Mr. Adams and other writers who have followed Mr. Upham, attribute the origin of Salem Witchcraft. It is a misfortune that the writer [Brooks Adams] did not appreciate his opportunity and lay aside prejudice and passion; for an historian has no right to misrepresent facts and absolve himself from an honest code of criticism; and this error is here charged upon Mr. Brooks Adams." [2]

In 1881, Henry Cabot Lodge published "A Short History of the English Colonies in America," and he had this to say of witchcraft:—

"The natural gloom of Puritan Society had thus deepened until it had become morbid, and wild beliefs needed only a spark to set them into a blaze of fanatical and bloodthirsty fear. To a people of this sort, who were familiar to a high degree with biblical theories, witchcraft and the intervention of Satan came as terrible but natural afflictions; while the course of the clergy, striving at that period to retain their power, and urged on by the fanaticism of Cotton Mather, fanned the flame."

Reviewing this book of Mr. Lodge's, Dr. Poole wrote:—

"Now this is simply bosh transcribed from the writers named above [Upham and Bancroft] and Mr. Lodge ought to have known its worthlessness. It was the lawyers and judges following English precedents, and not the Clergy, who were responsible for the atrocities at Salem in 1692." [3]

The services which Dr. Poole rendered to the memory of the clergy for their political sagacity and beneficent in-

[1] No. Am. Review, April, 1869, p. 373.
[2] Dial, March, 1887, p. 263. [3] *Ibid.*, June, 1881, p. 33.

fluence in the early days of the colonies found an admirable illustration in his article on "The Ordinance of 1787." Daniel Webster, in his reply to Hayne in 1830, attributed that ordinance to Nathan Dane of Ipswich, for Dane, in his later years, claimed its authorship. While admitting that the ordinance was in Dane's handwriting, Dr. Poole proved that its author was Rev. Manasseh Cutler of Ipswich. Mr. Shosuke Satō says of this article: "Mr. Poole's article remains the masterpiece on the subject of the Ordinance of 1787."

Is it not high time that the historical slanders upon the character and influence of the clergy of New England be given a death-blow? Shall not the twentieth century do justice to the Pilgrim and the Puritan, and to the noble men who first inspired them to leave home and native land for the privations of a wilderness? Judged by all the conventional standards of conservative judgment and good sense, of prudence and wise forethought, no ship, except a pirate craft, ever conveyed on one voyage such a cargo of foolhardy adventurers as did the Mayflower in 1620. But, as Edward Everett Hale, a few days since, in his address before the Massachusetts Club, quoting Dr. Faunce of Philadelphia, said, "That event of the landing of the Pilgrims was the greatest event in history." The more correct view is probably that of Hon. William M. Evarts, who, at the laying of the corner-stone of the Pilgrim Monument, in Plymouth, August 2, 1859, said, "No victory has ever been so pregnant in its consequences, no event in human story, save that which occurred in Bethlehem, has produced so vast a revolution in the destinies of the human race, as the emigration of the Pilgrims of the Mayflower." And why? Because the human reason and human wisdom hath its limitations and its boundaries. The world's greatest geniuses and explorers have gone beyond those boundaries, and have walked through faith with a

reliance on unseen forces that come not to the worldly wise. Call it the spirit of adventure if you please; it has conquered the world in discovery, and it has its victories yet to be achieved over the cynical cruelty and arrogant spirit of vested and property rights that have crystallized into vested wrongs. The General Court of Massachusetts in 1642 made quick work of an attempt of the shoemakers of Boston to combine for selfish ends. They simply prohibited it. They had the good sense to be afraid of it. They left it to the economists of this age to discover the beneficent results of combinations and consolidations. Professor John Graham Brooks of Cambridge has said that trusts have the stamp of nature upon them. The General Court of 1642 was not afraid of nature, but it was afraid of human nature, and in this it was wise.

If the modern trust is the product of the principle of evolution in the economic world, as many have claimed, and has beneficent results in economy of production far outreaching the evils attending the accumulation of power in the hands of a few men, then it is remarkable, that, within six years of the founding of Harvard College, the General Court of Massachusetts should have discovered so quickly and so easily the possibilities of evil, and should have protected the colonists by a decision so simple and so effective. It is rather amusing to hear of a great discovery in the economic world belonging to the closing of this century, a discovery that is two hundred and fifty years old in the historical annals of the Massachusetts Colony. We commend this simple fact to many of the modern political economists who find it very convenient to defend trust monopolies regardless of their merits, because, perhaps, universities are recipients of large gifts from many of the individuals who are enriched by them.

Political economy would receive much fairer and better treatment from sciolists than from many of the reputed

scientific writers of to-day, if it were treated from the point of view of the consumer, and not of the producer.

To whom are we indebted for the modern conception of democracy and equality? To Rev. Thomas Hooker, who arrived in Boston September 4, 1633, and who convinced even Governor Winthrop that his notions of the rule of what he termed "the best" was not democracy, but aristocracy. In the Massachusetts Colony the government was not, and never was intended to be, democratic. The agreement of the Commissioners of the various colonies in twelve articles constituted in effect a federal government. This Constitution prepared the way for that of 1787.

To whom was the Massachusetts Colony indebted for the famous "Body of Liberties" adopted in 1641? It was mainly the work of Rev. Nathaniel Ward of Ipswich. This "Body of Liberties" formed the basis of the law and civil government of the Massachusetts Colony.

To whom are we indebted for the Ordinance of 1787, with its wise provisions and its clauses forbidding slavery in the Northwest territory? It was the Rev. Manasseh Cutler of Ipswich who dictated to Dane what would be acceptable for a grant that was to be purchased by this new colony.

The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, prohibiting slavery, is identical with the sixth clause in the Ordinance of 1787. To whom did Lincoln say he was indebted for his views on slavery? To Rev. Leonard Bacon, of New Haven, who wrote a tract on the subject. Who did more than all others to create public opinion against slavery? The son and daughter of a Puritan clergyman,—Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Mrs. Beecher published in the *Ladies Home Journal*, about a year ago, that, at the time of issuing the Proclamation of Emancipation, Mr. Beecher sent a telegram to President Lincoln, asking if it were not time to issue it, and

Mr. Lincoln replied by wire that it was. The result was that famous document. Quite recently, Rev. Dr. Hillis, pastor of Plymouth Church, has been told by some member of Plymouth Church that President Lincoln secretly visited Mr. Beecher at Brooklyn at this time; but it would seem impossible that, if such were a fact, Mrs. Beecher should not have known of it, and should not have spoken of it in her "Reminiscences." The relater says that Mr. Lincoln came on a dark night, and such an event, that would have excited public attention, is hidden from the public only by this explanation. The story is improbable.

The political sagacity of Spain and its political science found expression in treachery, cunning, deceit, and trickery. But the political science which has been handed down to us a rich heritage, originated with men whose reason was illumined by the conscience. It took deep root in faith, and not in a shallow expediency. Such were the men who founded Harvard and Yale Colleges.

In the olden times, the educational and religious forces in a community were intimately associated, and hence were both under the control of the clergymen. The college president, and even the college treasurer, was a doctor of divinity or a professor. The modern college president must have the commercial instinct to the extent, at least, of being able to raise money. Theology and metaphysics are no longer considered essential qualities for those high offices.

When one observes a great university selecting for its treasurer one whose relations to corrupt official bodies have been simply notorious, and whose eloquence, though silent, was effective simply because it was silver-tongued, he cannot be blamed for concluding that the modern college treasurer is no improvement over the old doctor of divinity, who might have been sentimental, or theological, or even impracticable; but who was, at least, thoroughly sin-

cere and honest. It is a part of that program of modern times in educational matters that justifies the scramble for money, and forgets character as the ideal to be held up before young men who are fitting for the duties of life. It is a change for the worse from the good old times.

Dr. Poole belonged to the old school, who viewed money as a means to an end, and that end was always a useful and honorable one. Such were the men who founded Yale and Harvard Colleges. Such were the colonial clergymen who were reputed bigoted and narrow. With them originated the Connecticut Constitution of 1639; the Body of Liberties of 1641; the Federal Compact of 1643; the Ordinance of 1787. Their influence was felt in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of 1789, and the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. All of these documents are the result largely of the influence and teaching of those clergymen who have been charged with the crime of instigating the witchcraft tragedies, and of holding the people, for selfish ends, in the bonds of superstition, bigotry, and intolerance.

Since these men landed on American shores, great advancement has been made in notions of religious toleration, of democracy, and of political liberty; but a loftier faith and heroism, a greater fortitude and self-denial, a keener insight into principles giving wisdom and political sagacity, will never be found in the American people than that which characterized the Founders of this Republic, and the clergy of the colonial days. Such were Thomas Hooker, Nathaniel Ward, Cotton and Increase Mather, Manasseh Cutler, President Dwight, Nathaniel Emmons, President Edwards, and a long line of ancestry whose names have been distinguished in all the professions and in all spheres of activity and usefulness. Such men need no eulogy of words, as Taine said of Shakespeare: they only need to be understood. It was the privilege and the pleasure of Dr.

Poole to help the world to understand them by a simple presentation of the facts of history.

It has not been my purpose to touch upon many other phases of Dr. Poole's useful life, and I have omitted any reference to his sterling personal qualities,—his lovely domestic life, the absolute supremacy of his mind over his body, his loyalty to his friends, his hatred of sham and pretense, whether in literature or in religion. His work as a librarian and author may be found in any biographical dictionary of repute.

At the time of his death, his classmate and life-long friend, President Dwight of Yale, wrote, in a personal letter to the author:—

"I can scarcely bring myself to believe and realize that Dr. Poole is dead. I had thought of him as full of life and as likely to live for years to come. His passing away is indeed a loss to the country, how much more to us who loved him,—how much more to his family circle. . . . I feel that I have lost a true friend and one to whom my friendship had moored for many years. He was of the inner circle of the friendships coming down from the union of the College days, which have grown strong in manhood and progressing life. I grieve over his death with the sorrow which belongs to a true friendship."